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Kenneth R. Owens

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SUITE 600

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EXAMINER

MATTIS, JASON E

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2665

DATE MAILED: 02/27/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/692,884	OWENS ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Jason E. Mattis	2665	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 November 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. This Office Action is in response to the Pre-Brief Conference Request filed 11/21/05. Claims 1-24 are currently pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 10-11 and 13-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cao et al. (U.S. Application 09/318694) in view of McAllister et al. (U.S. Pat. 6697329).

With respect to claim 10, Cao et al. discloses a multi-protocol label switching system comprised of a plurality of data switches, label switching routers, that are interconnected by a plurality of data paths from a source node, LSR S, to a destination node, LSR E, through the data switches, LSR A and LSR B **(See paragraph 22 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to an MPLS data network comprised of label switching routers interconnected by paths)**. Cao et al. also discloses a method within the MPLS data network of routing a traffic flow from a working path through the network to a protection path through the network **(See paragraph 24 and Figure 1 of**

Cao et al. for reference to switching to a secondary path when a primary path fails). Cao et al. further discloses sending a first control message to establish a working data path and a separate protection path for the traffic flow from a first switch, LSR S, to a second switch, LSR E **(See paragraph 23-24 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to sending a router request downstream to request an explicitly routed path between source LSR S and destination LSR E and for reference to establishing a secondary route between source LSR S and destination LSR E).** Cao et al. does not disclose sending a second message from the second switch to the first switch establishing a reverse notification path through the network between the second and first switches. Cao et al. also does not disclose sending a third message over the reverse notification path from the second switch to the first switch in response to the second switch receiving the traffic from the first switch over the working path, the interruption of which controls protection switching by the first switch.

With respect to claim 10, McAllister et al., in the field of communications, discloses sending a message establishing a reverse notification path through the network between the first and second switches **(See column 9 line 47 to column 10 line 8 of McAllister et al. for reference to using a path from a second node to a first node to sending messages and acknowledgements to the message from the second node to the first node in response to protocol messages, the second message, sent from the first node).** McAllister et al. also discloses sending a third message over the reverse notification path from the second switch to the first switch in response to the second switch receiving the traffic from the first switch over the working

path, the interruption of which controls protection switching by the first switch (**See column 9 line 47 to column 10 line 8 of McAllister et al. for reference to the messaging being in an acknowledgement format, meaning that a third acknowledgement message is sent from the second node in response to receiving a message, which is in a traffic flow from the first node over a working virtual connection**). Setting up a reverse notification path and sending signals over the path to a first, source, node has the advantage of allowing a first, source, node to learn about a failure in a data path and immediately stop sending packets that will be “lost” on the failed path before the source node switches to the secondary path and also allowing the source node to resend packets on the secondary path that may have been “lost” while the destination node was receiving packets through the failed path.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, when presented with the work of McAllister et al., to combine setting up a reverse notification path and sending signals over the path to a first node to allow the first node to control protection switching, as suggested by McAllister et al., with the MPLS protection path system of Cao et al. with the motivation being to allow a first, source, node to learn about a failure in a data path and immediately stop sending packets that will be “lost” on the failed path before the source node switches to the secondary path and also allow the source node to resend packets on the secondary path that may have been “lost” while the destination node was receiving packets through the failed path.

With respect to claim 11, Cao et al. discloses that sending a first message is comprises adding a protection messaging field, which carries protection pathway information between switching elements, to a label distribution protocol message (**See column 24 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to using label distribution protocol to establish label switching paths to set up primary and protection data paths**).

With respect to claim 13, Cao et al. discloses that sending a first predetermined control message from a first switch to a second switch comprises includes identifying at least one switch as a protection switch element, LSR C and LSR D, by the contents of at least one control field sent to at least one switch, LSR E (**See paragraphs 23-24 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to LSR S using control fields to identify LSR C and LSR D as protection switch elements and sending this control information through the network to LSR E**).

With respect to claim 14, Cao et al. discloses the working path being set up loosely (**See paragraph 2 of Cao et al. for reference to prior art using loosely connected working and protection paths set up hop-by-hop**).

With respect to claim 15, Cao et al. discloses the working path being set up explicitly (**See paragraph 21 of Cao et al. for reference to explicitly setting up working and protection routing paths**).

With respect to claim 16, Cao et al. discloses mapping labels to the traffic flow routed along the working path according to predetermined criteria that includes the quality of service granted to the traffic flow (**See paragraph 53 and Figure 2 of Cao et**

al. for reference to mapping labels routed along the first path according to predetermined criteria including a type of service field, which includes quality of service information).

With respect to claim 17, Cao et al. discloses a system for establishing a traffic flow over a protection path in a data network (See paragraph 24 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to switching to a secondary path when a primary path fails).

Cao et al. also discloses a plurality of switches, label switching routers, operable to route the traffic flow in the data network **(See paragraph 22 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to the communications system including label switching routers that use paths to route a traffic flow).** Cao et al. further discloses a first one of switches, LSR S, operable to establish a working path and a protection and a second one of the plurality of switches, LSRs A, B, and E, that is downstream from the first switch being on the working path **(See paragraph 23-24 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to sending a router request downstream to request an explicitly routed path between source LSR S and destination LSR E that sets up a working path through LSRs S, A, B, and E, with LRSs A, B, and E downstream from LSR S).**

Cao et al. does not disclose that the second switch is operable to establish a reverse notification path and send a reverse notification message upstream to the first switch in response to receiving the traffic flow from the first switch. Cao et al. also does not disclose a reverse notification message operable to provide information related to the working path in order to determine whether the traffic flow is to be re-routed from the working path to the protection path.

With respect to claim 17, McAllister et al., in the field of communications, discloses sending a message establishing a reverse notification path through the network between the first and second switches in response to data received from the first switch **(See column 9 line 47 to column 10 line 8 of McAllister et al. for reference to using a path from a second node to a first node to sending messages and acknowledgements to the message from the second node to the first node in response to protocol messages, the second message, sent from the first node)**. McAllister et al. also discloses sending a third message over the reverse notification path the interruption of which is used to determine whether the traffic flow is to be re-routed from the working path to the protection path **(See column 9 line 47 to column 10 line 8 of McAllister et al. for reference to the messaging being in an acknowledgement format, meaning that a third acknowledgement message is sent from the second node in response to receiving a message, which is in a traffic flow from the first node over a working virtual connection)**. Setting up a reverse notification path and sending signals over the path to a first, source, node has the advantage of allowing a first, source, node to learn about a failure in a data path and immediately stop sending packets that will be “lost” on the failed path before the source node switches to the secondary path and also allowing the source node to resend packets on the secondary path that may have been “lost” while the destination node was receiving packets through the failed path.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, when presented with the work of McAllister et al., to combine setting up a

reverse notification path and sending signals over the path to a first node to allow the first node to control protection switching, as suggested by McAllister et al., with the MPLS protection path system of Cao et al. with the motivation being to allow a first, source, node to learn about a failure in a data path and immediately stop sending packets that will be “lost” on the failed path before the source node switches to the secondary path and also allow the source node to resend packets on the secondary path that may have been “lost” while the destination node was receiving packets through the failed path.

With respect to claims 18 and 20, Cao et al. does not disclose the first switch being a protection switch element operable to re-route data onto the protection path in accordance with the reverse notification message in response to not receiving the reverse notification message from the second switch within a predetermined time interval.

With respect to claims 18 and 20, McAllister et al. discloses that the first switch is a protection switch element operable to re-route the traffic flow onto the protection path in accordance with the reverse notification message **(See column 9 line 47 to column 10 line 8 of McAllister et al. for reference to the source or ingress node, which is the first switch, re-routing the connection to a different path and for reference to sending an acknowledgement message, or a third message, which the first node uses, by determining when the acknowledgement message was not received, or interrupted, to control protection switching from the second node to the first node)**. Setting up a reverse notification path and sending signals over the path

to a first, source, node has the advantage of allowing a first, source, node to learn about a failure in a data path and immediately stop sending packets that will be “lost” on the failed path before the source node switches to the secondary path and also allowing the source node to resend packets on the secondary path that may have been “lost” while the destination node was receiving packets through the failed path.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, when presented with the work of McAllister et al., to combine setting up a reverse notification path and sending signals over the path to a first node to allow the first node to control protection switching, as suggested by McAllister et al., with the MPLS protection path system of Cao et al. with the motivation being to allow a first, source, node to learn about a failure in a data path and immediately stop sending packets that will be “lost” on the failed path before the source node switches to the secondary path and also allow the source node to resend packets on the secondary path that may have been “lost” while the destination node was receiving packets through the failed path.

With respect to claims 19 and 21, Cao et al. does not disclose the first switch sending its own reverse notification message including information from the reverse notification message received from the second switch, with the reverse notification message informing the first switch of the status of the second switch and all other switches downstream from the first switch on the working path.

With respect to claims 19 and 21, McAllister et al. discloses a first switch sending and receiving reverse notification messages including the information from the

reverse notification messages received from all switches downstream from the first switch on the working path (**See column 9 line 47 to column 10 line 8 of McAllister et al. for reference to the acknowledgement messages sent by the nodes containing signaling messages for all virtual connections associate with a data link, meaning the content of each message is a compilation of the contents of acknowledgement messages from previous nodes, such that the acknowledgement message from the first node contains the information of the acknowledgement message from the second node**). Sending a reversion notification message including the information from the reverse notification messages received from another switch has the advantage of allowing link status information to be propagated throughout the network so that all switches know the status of all system links.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, when presented with the work of McAllister et al., to combine sending a reversion notification message including the information from the reverse notification messages received from another switch, as suggested by McAllister et al., with the MPLS protection path system of Cao et al. with the motivation being to allow link status information to be propagated throughout the network so that all switches know the status of all system links.

With respect to claims 22-24, Cao et al. does not disclose the second switch sending its reverse notification message directly to each of the switches including the particular switch that performs protection switching from the working path to the

protection path with the reverse notification message including information pertaining to a failure in the working path.

With respect to claims 22-24, McAllister et al. discloses switches sending reverse notification messages directly to other switches including the switch that performs protection switching with the reverse notification message including information pertaining to a failure on the working path (See column 9 line 47 to column 10 line 8 of McAllister et al. for reference to the acknowledgement messages being sent in a “poll” and “stat” format, meaning that a first source node will “poll” the status of a second node and the second node will respond with a “stat” message sent directly to the node that initiated the “poll” message and for reference to the “poll” and “stat” messages containing information pertaining to failures on the working path that is used by the first source node to perform protection switching). Sending reverse notification messages directly to other switches including the switch that performs protection switching with the reverse notification message including information pertaining to a failure on the working path has the advantage of allowing the protection switching to be processed and performed by a single specific protection switch without using the resources of the other switches to process each individual reverse notification message.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, when presented with the work of McAllister et al., to combine reverse notification messages directly to other switches including the switch that performs protection switching with the reverse notification message including information

pertaining to a failure on the working path, as suggested by McAllister et al., with the MPLS protection path system of Cao et al. with the motivation being to allow the protection switching to be processed and performed by a single specific protection switch without using the resources of the other switches to process each individual reverse notification message.

4. Claims 1-2, 4-5, and 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cao et al. (U.S. Application 09/318694) in view of McAllister et al. (U.S. Pat. 6697329) and in further view of Hwang et al. (U.S. Pat. 6590893).

With respect to claim 1, Cao et al. discloses a multi-protocol label switching system comprised of a plurality of data switches, label switching routers, that are interconnected by a plurality of data paths from a source node, LSR S, to a destination node, LSR E, through a first set of data switches, LSR A and LSR B **(See paragraph 22 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to an MPLS data network comprised of label switching routers interconnected by paths)**. Cao et al. also discloses a method within the MPLS data network of establishing a data flow over a protection path from a source switch, LSR S, to a destination switch, LSR E, through a second set of switches, LSR C and LSR D **(See paragraph 24 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to switching to a secondary path when a primary path fails)**. Cao et al. further discloses sending a first message to establish a working data path and a protection path for a traffic flow from a first switch, LSR S, to a second switch, LSR E **(See paragraph 23-24 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to sending a router**

request downstream to request an explicitly routed path between source LSR S and destination LSR E and for reference to establishing a secondary route between source LSR S and destination LSR E). Cao et al. does not disclose sending a second message from the second switch to the first switch establishing a reverse notification path through the network between the second and first switches. Cao et al. also does not disclose sending a third message over the reverse notification path in response to the second switch receiving the traffic flow over the working path from the first switch in order to control protection switching by the first switch, with the third message indicating whether the traffic flow sent on the working path was received intact and on time by the second switch.

With respect to claim 1, McAllister et al., in the field of communications, discloses sending a message establishing a reverse notification path through the network between the first and second switches **(See column 9 line 47 to column 10 line 8 of McAllister et al. for reference to using a path from a second node to a first node to sending messages and acknowledgements to the message from the second node to the first node in response to protocol messages, the second message, sent from the first node).** McAllister et al. also discloses sending a third message over the reverse notification path in response to the second switch receiving the traffic flow over the working path from the first switch in order to control protection switching by the first switch, with the third message indicating whether the traffic flow sent on the working path was received on time by the second switch **(See column 9 line 47 to column 10 line 8 of McAllister et al. for reference to the messaging**

being in an acknowledgement format, meaning that a third acknowledgement, message is sent from the second node in response to receiving a message, which is in a traffic flow from the first node over a working virtual connection, and for reference to the acknowledgement messages implementing a keep-alive or heartbeat polling process, meaning that the acknowledgement messages are an indication of whether the traffic is received on time since these messages are sent “constantly” and are therefore expected to be acknowledged “constantly”).

Setting up a reverse notification path and sending signals over the path to a first, source, node has the advantage of allowing a first, source, node to learn about a failure in a data path and immediately stop sending packets that will be “lost” on the failed path before the source node switches to the secondary path and also allowing the source node to resend packets on the secondary path that may have been “lost” while the destination node was receiving packets through the failed path.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, when presented with the work of McAllister et al., to combine setting up a reverse notification path and sending signals over the path to a first node to allow the first node to control protection switching, as suggested by McAllister et al., with the MPLS protection path system of Cao et al. with the motivation being to allow a first, source, node to learn about a failure in a data path and immediately stop sending packets that will be “lost” on the failed path before the source node switches to the secondary path and also allow the source node to resend packets on the secondary

path that may have been “lost” while the destination node was receiving packets through the failed path.

With respect to claim 1, although McAllister et al. discloses the use of acknowledgement messages, the combination of McAllister et al. and Cao et al. does not disclose that acknowledgement messages are used as an indication whether the traffic flow sent on the working path was received intact.

With respect to claim 1, Hwang et al., in the field of communications discloses acknowledgement messages that are used as an indication whether a traffic flow was received intact (See column 7 lines 40-50 of Hwang et al. for reference to an acknowledgement messages that is only sent if data was received without errors, meaning the reception or lack of reception of an acknowledgement message is used as an indication of whether a traffic flow was received without errors, or intact). Using acknowledgement messages that are used as an indication whether a traffic flow was received intact has the advantage of allowing the quality of a data link to be signaled from a destination node to a source node such that the source node can determine if data being sent of a path between the source and destination is being received without error.

It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, when presented with the work of Hwang et al., to combine using acknowledgement messages that are used as an indication whether a traffic flow was received intact, as suggested by Hwang et al., with the system and method of Cao et al. and McAllister et al., with the motivation being to allow the quality of a data link to be

signaled from a destination node to a source node such that the source node can determine if data being sent of a path between the source and destination is being received without error.

With respect to claim 2, Cao et al. discloses that the step of sending a first message is comprised of the step of adding a protection messaging field, which carries protection pathway information between switching elements, to a label distribution protocol message **(See column 24 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to using label distribution protocol to establish label switching paths to set up primary and protection data paths)**.

With respect to claim 4, Cao et al. discloses that the step of sending a message to establish a working path and a protection path between the first and second switches, LSR S and LSR E, includes the step of identifying at least one data switch, LSR S, as a switch element by the contents of at least one control field sent to at least one data switch, LSR E, of the MPLS network **(See paragraph 23-24 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to LSR S using control fields sent through the network to LSR E to request an explicitly routed path identifying itself as the source LSR)**.

With respect to claim 5, Cao et al. discloses that the step of sending a first predetermined message to establish a working path and a protection path between the first and second switches, LSR S and LSR E, includes the step of identifying at least one data switch as a protection switch element, LSR C and LSR D, by the contents of at least one control field sent to at least one data, switch LSR E, of the MPLS network **(See paragraphs 23-24 and Figure 1 of Cao et al. for reference to LSR S using**

control fields to identify LSR C and LSR D as protection switch elements and sending this control information through the network to LSR E).

With respect to claim 7, Cao et al. discloses the working path being set up loosely (See paragraph 2 of Cao et al. for reference to prior art using loosely connected working and protection paths set up hop-by-hop).

With respect to claim 8, Cao et al. discloses the working path being set up explicitly (See paragraph 21 of Cao et al. for reference to explicitly setting up working and protection routing paths).

With respect to claim 9, Cao et al. discloses a step for mapping labels to the traffic flow routed along the working path according to predetermined criteria that includes the quality of service granted to the traffic flow (See paragraph 53 and Figure 2 of Cao et al. for reference to mapping labels routed along the first path according to predetermined criteria including a type of service field, which includes quality of service information).

5. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Coe et al. in view of McAllister et al. and Hwang et al. as applied to claims 1-2, 4-5, and 7-9 above, and further in view of Aukia et al. (U.S. Pat. 6594268).

With respect to claim 3, the combination of Cao et al., McAllister et al., and Hwang et al. does not disclose that sending a first message is comprised of the step of

adding a protection messaging field, which carries protection pathway information between switching elements, to an MPLS reservation protocol message.

Aukia et al., in the field of communications, discloses that sending a message is comprised of the step of adding a protection messaging field, which carries protection pathway information between switching elements, to an MPLS reservation protocol message **(See column 9 line 60 to column 10 line 47 and Figure 2 of Aukia et al. for reference to control messages using RSVP protocol, which are used to carry protection pathway information between network nodes)**. Using an MPLS reservation protocol message to carry protection pathway information between switching elements has the advantage of being able to share protection pathway information between network elements using the current MPLS protocol, meaning that the current MPLS protocol would not have to be changed in order to implement the invention.

It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, when presented with the work of Aukia et al. to combine the use of an MPLS reservation protocol message of Aukia et al. with the MPLS protection path method of Cao et al., McAllister et al., and Hwang et al., with the motivation being to be able to share protection pathway information between network elements using the current MPLS protocol, meaning that the current MPLS protocol would not have to be changed in order to implement the invention.

6. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Coe et al. in view of McAllister et al. as applied to claims 10-11 and 13-24 above, and further in view of Aukia et al. (U.S. Pat. 6594268).

With respect to claim 12, the combination of Cao et al. and McAllister et al. does not disclose that sending a first message is comprised of the step of adding a protection messaging field, which carries protection pathway information between switching elements, to an MPLS reservation protocol message.

Aukia et al., in the field of communications, discloses that sending a message is comprised of the step of adding a protection messaging field, which carries protection pathway information between switching elements, to an MPLS reservation protocol message **(See column 9 line 60 to column 10 line 47 and Figure 2 of Aukia et al. for reference to control messages using RSVP protocol, which are used to carry protection pathway information between network nodes)**. Using an MPLS reservation protocol message to carry protection pathway information between switching elements has the advantage of being able to share protection pathway information between network elements using the current MPLS protocol, meaning that the current MPLS protocol would not have to be changed in order to implement the invention.

It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, when presented with the work of Aukia et al. to combine the use of an MPLS reservation protocol message of Aukia et al. with the MPLS protection path method of Cao et al. and McAllister et al., with the motivation being to be able to share protection

pathway information between network elements using the current MPLS protocol, meaning that the current MPLS protocol would not have to be changed in order to implement the invention.

7. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cao et al. in view of McAllister et al. as applied to claims 1-2, 4-5, and 7-9 above, and further in view of Lemieux (U.S. Pat. 6452942).

With respect to claim 6, the combination of Cao et al., McAllister et al., and Hwang et al. does not specifically disclose a step of label binding the first message for the second switch to a third switch.

Lemieux, in the field of communications, discloses using label binding to distribute information to other label switches in a network (**See column 5 line 45 to column 6 line 4 of Lemieux for reference to using label binding to distribute information to other label switches in a network**). Using label binding has the advantage of being able to explicitly map data to specific label switching paths.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, when presented with the work of Lemieux, to combine the label binding of Lemieux with the MPLS data network protection paths of Cao et al., McAllister et al., and Hwang et al., with the motivation being to be able to explicitly map data to specific label switching paths.

Response to Arguments

8. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-9 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jason E. Mattis whose telephone number is (571) 272-3154. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8AM-4:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Huy Vu can be reached on (571) 272-3155. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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